

FORCED APART

By W. CLARK RUSSELL.

Author of the "Wreck of the Grosvenor,"
"A Sailor's Sweetheart," Etc.CHAPTER X.
THE ACTION.

At ten of the forenoon the Frenchman lay plain on the sea, with colors flying, musketeers in her tops, and her bulwarks black with the heads of her men. A big frigate she was, of the graceful shape which the British were all too slow to copy in their dockyards; and the Gallic cocks in her hen-coops might well have swelled their throats with derisive screams when they beheld the English sparrows sailing down to grapple with the hawk.

The first shot fired came from the frigate, when she was still out of reach of the Cleopatra's guns. Cuthbert saw the glances of yellow flame and the smother of white smoke; the ball whirled up a little pillar of froth out of the sea close alongside, and then came the report, quelling its sting against the wind's teeth.

"My lads," exclaimed Sir Peter Grahame, standing at the quarter-deck capstan with his hat in his hand, "yonder ship is the Guerriere. None of the enemy's ships has done more damage to our peaceful merchantmen than she. She is a big nut to crack, but our beards are shod with British iron, and we'll grind the kernel out of her yet. Hold on all till you get your orders, then make one man of yourselves. Now God be with us!"

A cheer like a broadside was given; the helm put over, the loftier sails furling and the Cleopatra drove on toward her enemy.

The Cleopatra's flying jibboom pointed due amidships of the Guerriere; then by length of a spoke was the wheel put over, round swept the Guerriere's helm, that she might rake the Cleopatra as she passed under her stern. But lo! the brig, twisting on her keel like a yacht, put her nose at the revolving Frenchman and blazed! blazed! went her two bow chasers, and down came the flag of the republic, along with the gaff and a spatter of canvas shreds. A minute later the vessels lay broadside on to one another, as close as two houses on opposite sides of a street; and simultaneously from both of them leapt out a line of flame, with a roar as of a mountain rent in twain by an earthquake and the smashing and splintering of woodwork, while all between was smoko.

Now had the action begun in earnest, and a sight for Cuthbert to remember was the deck of the English brig. Calm as a statue and as steady Sir Peter Grahame stood some fathoms forward of the wheel with powerful voice and slight gesture of the arm giving his orders. You would have said that he had eyes all over his body—eyes for the helmsman at the back of him and the yards and sails above him; for the grivory seamen sweating at the guns and for every toss of the arm of the gold-laced French commander shrieking, after the manner of his nation, from the raised after-deck of his ship.

Now the English captain began to see that he should be overmatched if he did not lay the Frenchman on board; for his eighteen-pounders could make no fight with the enemy's heavy artillery, and there was small chance of prize money and the glory of a gazetted unless the boarding pike and cutlass came into play. But as he gave the order to man the weather braces to sheer the brig alongside, his foretop mast was carried away, and all his head sail with it. As a running man, shot in the leg, falls a cripple and slues around in a helpless state, so the Cleopatra, deprived of her forward canvas, rounded up into the wind's eye, whereupon the Frenchman sailed clean round her, drenching her with both broadsides in rotation. The second discharge was a murderous volley; for a ball smashed the wheel and killed the men at it, and a bullet hit Sir Peter Grahame under the arm, and he fell, mortally wounded.

At the beginning of the fight Cuthbert had stood at the foot of the mainmast, unnoticed by officers and crew—in the furious excitement and splendid horrors of the scene forgetting self—eager to help, but in his ignorance not knowing what to be at, when a cannon ball struck a seaman in the back, and threw him forward with a heavy smash, where he lay dead as dust, with his face a mask of blood.

This was the first man killed; but scarcely was he down when a gunner leaped from the breach he was patting and tumbled backward, moaning shockingly.

"Help me carry him below!" sang out a voice; and, with a sick heart and damp forehead, Cuthbert buckled to the worst bit of work a sea fight gives.

He had returned on deck for the twentieth time, and was at his former post, ready to do what should be wanted, when the foretop-mast fell, with its heap of sail and rigging, and the brig shot round; and in a few minutes the Guerriere poured in the first of her two deadly broadsides. He heard the grape screech past him, and beheld the carnage of it; and then he saw Transom, with his hand to his ear, rush forward and call upon the men to clear away the wreck, and "bear a hand, or the brig would be taken."

And all the while the Frenchman was sneaking round to bring her port broadside to bear, and her small-arms men and topmen were discharging volleys of musketry at the small band of Englishmen on the brig's forecastle. Then, before the staysail could be hoisted, the Guerriere poured her second tremendous storm of flame and thunder and iron into the devoted brig.

Cuthbert saw the captain fall, and sprang aft. He placed his arm under the dying man's head to raise him.

"Too late—I am bleeding inwardly!" he gasped. "Tell Lieutenant Transom to strike—drag my body abaft the skylight—they are too many for us—my poor men!"

Then came Transom rushing aft with despair in his face, for he had seen that the wheel was gone and their case was hopeless. Beholding the dead body of Sir Peter, he started back, gazed despairingly around him, and buried his face in his hands.

"The captain's last words to me were that I should tell you to strike," exclaimed Cuthbert.

"Yes, yes," groaned Transom, "it must be done. God help us! Half our men are killed—the wheel is gone—I must stop this carnage."

And he went aft with a tottering step, and, grasping the signal hammers, hauled down the colors.

The Guerriere, to leeward, was working up to rake the brig again, but when her men saw the English flag hauled down they sent up such a shriek as nothing less than the capture of a line of battle ship could have justified. What! all this clamorous exultation over the defeat of a little ten-gun cruiser of one hundred and twenty men by a great thirty-six gun frigate of three hundred men! But a shout rarely provoked may well be a loud one.

And what was Monsieur's plight? It is known that the Guerriere had eighty men killed and one hundred and eight wounded in this action. The sun shone through her sails like a lamp through a sieve; her mizzenmast, foretopgallantmast and jibboom were gone; her figurehead smashed, and part of her bulwarks in splinters. She looked to the full as much a wreck as the Cleopatra. And if there is anything certain in naval history, it is that, could Sir Peter Grahame have put



Cuthbert saw the captain fall.

his brig on board the Frenchman, disorganized by havoc, he would have carried her. So let us fling the union jack over the valiant dead, and with reverent gratitude thank God that they were our countrymen.

CHAPTER XI.
JENNY CONFESSES.

In Mr. Strangfield's yard brisk business was doing. On stages round the skeleton hulls workmen were sending up a clang of saw and hammer. He walked sedately about, his hands clasped behind him, pausing often, and challenging the men's work with eyes which they had good reason to believe could see through an oak plank. He rebuked no jest, he was deaf to songs; but if ever a hint of scamping showed itself, in front of the sinner he stopped, and stared at him, immovable, with face of wood, which method of correction was as effectual as storming in immediate efficacy, and in the long run more prodigal of good results.

Indoors, in the same sitting room in which we have sat with Mr. and Mrs. Strangfield, Jenny was at work on a gown, which, you know, in that age had short sleeves, and a waist just under the bosom, and a brave breast opening for the divulgence of sweet secrets. This was a gown that Jenny herself had made, and toiled at with love and smiles and many a soft whisper; for it was to be put aside to furnish, with other work of her pretty fingers, her wifely equipment when Cuthbert should take her home.

But as she sat over it now she would leave her needle in the stuff, while her chin sank into the hollow of her hand, and her dreamy eyes looked out through the open window upon the people in the market place.

There was trouble enough to sadden her. First of all, her father had not spoken to her that morning; with a sullen aversion of head he had declined her kiss, and with an iron manner turned from her.

Then her mother was peevish and short, irritated by the alarmed curiosity which Jenny refused to gratify, and wagging her head at her for an obstinate wench.

In pensive posture she was musing when her mother came actively into the room, with skirt tucked up for kitchen work, and face red with scolding and serious cooking. To milder natures than Mrs. Strangfield's—and truly mild was hers—has the "general servant," or maid of all work, as that age termed the Thing, proved a steady vexation; and there was no more obliging, idle, willing, neglectful, fearful and ignorant slut in Graystone than the Polly Baggs who "did" (in several senses) for the Strangfields.

"There's no trusting the creature a moment!" cried Mrs. Strangfield, leaving the door open that her voice might carry to the kitchen, and making Jenny a mere excuse for a parenthetical attack on Polly. "Will you believe it!—the knives are not yet cleaned; the slaughterer hath left your father's new boots all night in the scullery; and not a bedroom touched."

"Still a dreaming?" she exclaimed to Jenny. "What with Polly's sinful idleness and thy moping face and dreadful swooning, I scarce know which end of me is upright. Tell me now, Jenny, if—well, say yes if I am right, then. Was it not Mr. Shaw whom you cried out about in the bedroom?"

The girl turned her pretty eyes upon her mother, and answered under her breath, "Why should it be Mr. Shaw, mother?"

"Nay, say, it was—I see it in your face!" called Mrs. Strangfield, with a little burst of triumph. Jenny was silent. "Tell me it was—tell me it was. I shall not be angry, Jenny."

"It was," replied Jenny.

"Now, Jenny," continued Mrs. Strangfield, leaning forward in her eagerness, "tell me in two little words, what is there between thee and him?"

"Mother, I told father last night that you and he shall be answered, but not by me!"

"By whom, then, Jenny?" said Mrs. Strangfield, coaxingly. "See, my dear, I am not angry; I do but want the truth. Your father is in a bad way because of your stubbornness. Mr. Shaw is a pleasing young gentleman, and the Lord forbid that I should quarrel with a man of his quality for—"

Here was a long pause, and then insinuatingly, "Now wilt thou not help me, Jenny?"

"Mother, mother, is it fair to press me in this way?" responded Jenny, with a bewildered look, yet with something like spirit quivering in her mouth. "Neither you nor father will bide. He has not heard me, and yet he judges. How cold and hard was he to me this morning! Oh, mother, I have a secret—it will make him angry, and I fear him! I have not courage to tell it myself, but it shall be told you. Oh, be sure, mother, you shall know it."

And now speaking thus, more fully than mere thinking could realize for her, did she feel the secret shiver and bitter fear that made her crave for Cuthbert's presence and support when the moment of disclosure or discovery should arrive.

Somehow, it had become a habit with her to believe that when the secret was told to her father, he, in his deep wrath, would turn her from the house—a notion built by her terror on the fierce severity of his judgments on human weaknesses.

And of this conviction, intolerable to her when seized with sense of loneliness, the pain and shame and misery were only to be mitigated to her imagination by her resolve to hold her tongue until Cuthbert was beside her; that, should her father drive her from her roof, her husband's hand would be in hers.

Mrs. Strangfield stared at her as a stranger might.

Of this lovable child of hers—this sweet and placid girl, whose pure soul workings had been heretofore as plainly figured in her lovely face as clock work shows in a crystal box—she on a sudden could make neither head nor tail; for a virtuous and holy reason, indeed! that no question of her child's honor could arise.

The fall of the moon or the drying up of the sea sooner than such a thing.

And not hitting upon a secret marriage, what, then, could remain but love? which, to be hugged as a mystery, to hold the tongue obstinate, to set a body swooning, altogether passed her simple understanding.

No wonder, therefore, was she puzzled and stared with perplexity.

With her honest wits at work she tried her

hand at a solution.

"If you are in love with Mr. Shaw, and letting him court you slyly, your father will certainly be angry when he hears of it; because he does not like under dealing in man or woman, and would think it unpardonable in thee, who shouldst know better. But this I may say, child, that though I should agree with your father in thinking ill of a secret love, I would not allow him to say too much to you, nor set his face against the young man. You are fit to be a gentleman's wife, as I have told him over and over, and if you will just own all to me, Jenny, I'll break it to him as his wife should know how, and the rest will be easy, my dear. I am not averse to Mr. Shaw—quite the contrary; though what his father will say is another matter. But, then, 'tis no business of ours. Young Mr. Shaw is a handsome youth, and not accountable for his father. Indeed, if he truly loves you, he will attend chapel, which would win thy father's heart. You needn't smile. I have heard of a man turning Hebrew Jew to marry, and if a man can deny the Lord for love of a wench, surely Mr. Shaw may easily become a Baptist."

Jenny's smile quickly faded. It seemed easy to say the few words, and if their effect could begin and end in the kind-eyed mother who watched her, long ago would they have been said. But when she thought of her father, her throat grew dry.

In the midst of the silence between them, both actively thinking in wide-parted ways, there fell a substantial knocking on the house door; whereat up jumped Mrs. Strangfield, to see to her cap and gown, and square up all dishevelment, whilst Jenny's heart thumped wildly, and the work fell from her lap to the ground unheeded.

"Now, surely," exclaimed Mrs. Strangfield, "this cannot be Mr. Shaw who should have come last night!" and she looked at Jenny's white face with an air of comical fright, for, loudly as she talked, she was sincerely afraid of Michael.

Presently in floundered dirty Polly Baggs, with the bustling importance a bad servant assumes when she thinks she has something of consequence to deliver.

"Please, missus, you're wanted."

"Who wants me! Did you answer the door with that smut on your nose! Oh, for shame, you baggage! Who is it? Be quick—be quick! Don't you see you're keeping them waiting?"

"It's a gentleman," said Polly, surlily passing the whole length of her arm over her face in pursuit of the smut, which she succeeded in lodging under her eye.

"Well, show him in."

"He axed for master first."

"Show him in, I say."

Who should appear, bowing gravely, his soft hat under his arm, and his light hair oiled and brushed into a cone, but Dr. Shaw's English master, Mr. Sanderson. Mrs. Strangfield favored him with a swift courtesy, and Jenny also prettily bent her knees, though fear made that an easier job than stiffening them again.

"Pray, sir, take that chair," said Mrs. Strangfield, with fussy politeness. "Do you wish to see Mr. Strangfield? He is in his yard, and shall be called at once, if you please. He hath much business on hand just now—two vessels building, and an order received for one yesterday, and likewise a galley for Mr. Jackson, of Mount Zion."

With much deliberation, undisturbed by Jenny's beauty, at which he flung several respectful, ardent glances, Mr. Sanderson put his hat on the table, divided his coat tails, and sat himself down. That he was in no hurry was easily seen, which very considerably, in Mrs. Strangfield's eyes, heightened the mystery of his visit.

"I am truly glad, madam," said he, "to hear of the flourishing condition of your husband's business, and would on no account have him summoned from his duties. You and your charming daughter will, I am sure, be as fully competent as he to answer the question which has occasioned my intrusion upon you."

"Indeed, sir, we shall be glad to oblige you in any way in our power."

"You are most considerate. I must tell you that Dr. Shaw, of Graystone school, with which academy I am at present associated, is much troubled about his son, Mr. Cuthbert, who, I believe, is known to you?"

This he said interrogatively, looking first at one and then at the other of them. Mrs. Strangfield gave her daughter a quick glance and replied:

"Mr. Shaw is known to me by sight, sir, but I have not the honor of a speaking acquaintance with him."

Mr. Sanderson elevated his eyebrows.

"Why, then," said he, "I have been greatly misinformed. It was told that Mr. Shaw visited here, and was on the most friendly footing with your family; and he looked at Jenny with a smirk that gave a large meaning to his words."

"Whoever said that spoke what is entirely false!" cried Mrs. Strangfield, indignantly. "Pray, sir, who gave you this piece of news?"

"An old woman named Mead, ma'am, who lives behind the market yard. I was directed to her as a gossip who has all facts concerning this town at her finger ends. Says she: 'If you are hunting after Mr. Shaw go to Michael Strangfield's house—the wooden house by the boatyard. If they choose to speak they can tell you all you want to know.'"

"Mrs. Mead is a shocking false speaker and is most unbearably impertinent to use our name in answering you. There is no truth in what she hath said. If you seek Mr. Shaw he is not here."

"Still, ma'am, I trusted that you—or you, miss—might know of his whereabouts. Last evening he left his father's house and has not returned. If he has run away he has gone foolishly to work—slyly and foolishly, ladies—for no man has seen him, and he has left with no more clothes to carry than what are on his back. It is idle to suppose that he is dead, for the cliff has been searched and the sands under the cliff, and all about the country we have sent our big boys and some men, and no sign of him visible."

Jenny sat motionless, staring at the speaker with unwinning eyes.

"However," continued he, slowly taking his hat from the table and rising, "it is plain that he is not here, and that you know nothing about him. His loss will be a heavy blow to his father, who had great hopes of him; though, for my part, I cannot help thinking that he kept him too much under, and so forced him, after a manner, to leave his home."

"But what is thought, sir? What doth his father think?" exclaimed Mrs. Strangfield, too much interested to notice the growing strangeness in Jenny's eyes and the singular blanching of her lips.

"Why, Dr. Shaw cannot conceive what has become of him; he is in a bad way, and there is no school kept this morning. Quite a sadness has fallen upon the boys, who talk together in subdued voices; for Cuthbert Shaw was a kind young gentleman, much loved by us all. As to what has become of him, I have my own opinion. Last night, a little before nine, I saw him leave the house, dressed more queerly than ever I had taken notice of in him. Shall I say shabbily dressed? That was it, ma'am. He was undoubtedly annoyed to find me posted at the gate, and addressed me very hurriedly, and was glad to make off. Now, I can put two and two together as well as another; yesterday afternoon it was that he spoke to me of being weary of his life under his father—not precisely those

words, Mrs. Strangfield, but his meaning. Now, what would his disappearance represent but the true significance of his language to me?"

Having delivered himself of which, Mr. Sanderson bowed low to Jenny, saluted Mrs. Strangfield and went away, expostulating with the elder lady for coming to the door with him—though politeness was not so much her reason as a resolve to favor him with further views of her own respecting Mrs. Mead before she let him out.

Now, scarce had she re-entered the little sitting room when she uttered a shriek and ran forward to her daughter, whose aspect was one that might well excite a mother's terror. She stood rocking herself at the window, with both hands upon her heart, and her face of the dreadful whiteness of the dead. Mortally wounded she looked, with her languishing eyes.

"Oh, my God! what is this, Jenny!" cried her mother, flinging her arms around her. "Was he so dear to thee, then?"

No answer came from the pale lips for some moments, only hard struggles for breath, with now and again a little moan.

"Oh, Jenny, rest thy poor head on my shoulder! Oh, little hands, how bitterly cold! My lamb, my pretty one—hath he betrayed thee? Why were you not brave to speak out your heart's secret to me! Whisper now, whisper now, that I may comfort thee."

"Mother, I am his wife!" the girl answered, and with a mighty effort overcame the nausea and the darkness of swooning, and drew away from her mother and stood erect.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



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With the Annual Report of the above Company is attached a large number of Death claims paid from February 1882 to February 1886, representing all parts of the Union, amounting to \$1,685,200.00 from this list we take claims in South Carolina which have been paid:

Valentine R. Jordan, West Wateree, \$2,000.
Jno. S. Small, Grahams, \$1,250.
Henry L. Krause, Port Royal, \$1,250.
J. E. Todd, West Wateree, \$1,000.
Wm. H. Whilden, Jacksonville, \$5,000.
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Depart Kingville..... 9.56 a m

Due at Columbia..... 10.35 a m

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Depart Columbia..... 5.27 p m

Depart Kingville..... 6.07 p m

Depart Orangeburg..... 6.48 p m

Depart Branchville..... 7.25 p m

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ACCOMMODATION LOCAL TRAIN.

Going West, Daily.

Depart Charleston..... 5.10 p m

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Depart Orangeburg..... 8.12 p m

Depart Kingville..... 9.08 p m

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Going East, Daily.

Depart Columbia..... 6.30 a m

Depart Kingville..... 7.15 a m

Depart Orangeburg..... 8.12 a m

Depart Branchville..... 9.00 a m

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Going West.

Depart Branchville..... 6.45 a m

Depart Orangeburg..... 8.12 a m

Depart St. Matthews..... 8.48 a m

Due Kingville..... 9.30 a m

Going East.

Depart Kingville..... 6.13 p m

Depart St. Matthews..... 6.58 p m

Depart Orangeburg..... 7.40 p m

Due Branchville..... 8.45 p m

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West, Daily, Except Sunday.

Depart Kingville..... 10.05 a m 6.12 p m

Due at Camden..... 12.37 p m 7.42 p m

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Depart Camden..... 7.00 a m 3.15 p m

Due at Kingsville..... 8.30 a m 5.47 p m